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late July 1972

**MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT**

**FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER**

**SUBJECT: Intelligence Report of Growing Difficulties in North Vietnam**

DIA review completed.

According to an unevaluated intelligence report from our military attache in Paris, the North Vietnamese population is demoralized, and the Politburo is in "disarray" and convinced that the war must end this year. The information, summarized below, was obtained by a private French source in contact with a North Vietnamese who recently returned from Hanoi. We have been unable to determine the contact's level of access to inside information within North Vietnam, but he has reported for several years. Some of his reports have been on the sensational side, but others have checked out.

Popular Attitudes: The contact reported that the North Vietnamese population is demoralized and "ready to explode". Human reserves are taxed to the maximum and are limited while rationing is more extensive than in 1968. Pamphlets are circulating within intellectual circles questioning the value of liberating the South and the regime is conducting an anti-pacifist campaign. Friction has developed between party cadre and villagers who are asking openly when the war will end. The cadre are responding for the first time that the war will be over in six months. The Secret Police, however, are in a stronger position than ever.

Politburo Dissension: The North Vietnamese Politburo is reported as being in a state of "disarray" and has lost its past equilibrium. All Politburo members are convinced that the war must end this year. The Politburo reportedly now admits that they can no longer force a Communist government on the South or overthrow President Thieu militarily. They are in fact prepared to sacrifice the PRG and replace it with a purely political government.

Situation in the South: The contact reportedly told the source that North Vietnam miscalculated the results of the spring offensive. The ARVN has fought well; the population has not risen against Thieu and attacks have legitimized U.S. aid to South Vietnam.

Dikes Propaganda: The contact speculated that North Vietnam itself might destroy some of its dikes in order to prove its propaganda charges of a deliberate U.S. bombing campaign against the water control system.

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Future Objectives: North Vietnam reportedly has failed in its conventional and guerilla war. The only remaining avenue is subversion to hold and populate the currently occupied territory. The war, again the contact concluded, must end this year.

Comment: The report is perhaps the most pessimistic assessment yet obtained on the situation within North Vietnam. While the North without doubt is suffering greatly from our bombing and mining, we have as yet received no corroborating information that the population is "about to explode" or that the Politburo is deeply divided. The key factor remains the Secret Police who are stronger than ever today and probably able to contain any widespread dissent. It nonetheless remains significant that the DRV has been compelled to strengthen its security apparatus to ensure continued sacrifices by the North Vietnamese population.

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